



James K. Barnett

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Mr. John Tolley, DOT/PF Planning Director
P. O. Box 196900
Anchorage, AK 99519-6900

Mr. Jeff Otteson, DOT/PF Deputy Commissioner
3132 Channel Drive, Suite 200
Juneau, AK 99801-7898

Subject: Seward Highway Improvements

Gentlemen:

Last week, the Girdwood 2020 Community Projects meeting was held with Rep. Mike Hawker and David Post, the DOT/PF planner for Anchorage. During the meeting we learned that the state has recently dropped the Seward Highway improvements south of Potter Section House from the State Transportation Improvement Plan. This is a major concern that needs to be rectified. As David explained, the STIP in its current form is now out for review by the agency, with comments due by December 31, 2005.

Like every other user of this highway, I think it is essential that the 4-lane divided highway from Potter to Girdwood be re-established in the STIP. There are significant safety concerns that continue unabated until we have a four-lane divided highway to Girdwood. For example, there have been several collisions on the highway in the past several months, with loss of life.

Since the meeting, Rep. Hawker forwarded a letter that he received from Mayor Begich on this issue. The problem is apparently that the "bridge money", which we have heard so much about, takes all the funds from regular projects for our community. Unfortunately, the mayor did not mention the Seward Highway as a loser in this process, probably because that is outside the area that his staff concentrates on.

Nonetheless, having a Four Lane Divided Highway between Anchorage and Girdwood will vastly improve the safety of all Seward Highway users, whether traveling to Girdwood or further south to Portage, Whittier, or the Kenai Peninsula. We have all had many scary passing situations on this highway, and have been frustrated behind loads of traffic. This matter needs to be corrected and the first step is to keep this important project in the STIP.

Sincerely,



James K. Barnett

cc: Mayor Begich
Rep. Hawker
Sen. Bunde
Assemblymembers Birch and Shamberg